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# THE

MONTHLY



# GULL

BULLETIN

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**JANUARY MEETING:** The next regular meeting of the Audubon Association of the Pacific will be held on Thursday evening, the 10th of January, at 8 o'clock, in the Board Room of the State Board of Harbor Commissioners, Room 19, 2nd Floor, Ferry Bldg.

Mr. E. R. Kauffman, editor of the *Pacific Sportsman Magazine*, will again lead the discussion on the continuation of the same topic treated of at last meeting under the title of "Great Influence of Sportsman on Conservation of all Wild Life Species."



**JANUARY FIELD TRIP** will be the usual visit to the wild waterfowl sanctuary at Lake Merritt, Oakland. It will be taken on Sunday, January 13th. San Francisco members will take Key Route boat at 9:00 a. m. and the Grand Avenue car at Twenty-second Street train from the mole, leaving the car at Grand Avenue and Perkins Street, where the party will form at 9:45 a. m. and proceed to the enclosure on the nearby lake shore, to witness the feeding of the wild fowl at 10 a. m.

East Bay members will transfer from any traction main line to Grand Avenue or Lakeshore Avenue cars, which will take them to the above-mentioned point.

The main object of the trip is to study waterfowl, but some incidental land birds are always found. Those who wish to round out the day by exploring what is left of Trestle Glen should bring lunches.



**DECEMBER MEETING:** The one hundred and thirty-ninth meeting of the Audubon Association of the Pacific was held on the 13th of December in the Board Room of the State Board of Harbor Commissioners, presided over by the President, Dr. Frederick W. D'Evelyn.

Mr. E. R. Kauffman, editor of the *Pacific Sportsman Magazine*, led the discussion under the title of the "Great Influence of Sportsman on Conservation of all Wild Life Species." The interest in and the appropriateness of the subject were such that it was decided that it be adopted again as the topic for the next meeting, especially as it was found to be so far-reaching in the many aspects presented by the speaker that much of importance and interest, inevitably omitted because of the limit of time, should be discussed at further length.

The speaker began by dividing public interest in animal wild life under three classifications: first, the sentimental; second, the economic, both material and aesthetic, and, third, that of sport considering the healthful and invigorating exercise it affords and the skill called into play.

Not always are those under either of the three denominations in harmony with the others as they really should be, as, for instance, one of the reasons for the objection to killing is not always borne out by fact because it does not always lessen wild life. Then the exercise and the enjoyment of the sportsman support the means for enforcement of the protective laws for wild game and even of non-game life, including propagation and protection.

The speaker dwelt at length on this topic, enumerating the large figures representing the expense incurred in the protection of non-game wild life, which has its economic compensation in being a direct help for the farmer.

The speaker presented a very interesting analysis of his estimate of the value of wild life, game and non-game, to the State of California. Adding the commercial proceeds, the value of the sportsman's spoils, the income of transportation companies from those traveling purely in the interest of wild life and other items we get a total which, considered as interest at 6%, would represent a capital of nine hundred and sixty million dollars (\$960,000,000), the thus appraised value of legitimate game in California.

Then Mr. Kauffman surprised the meeting by explaining that as to the choice of the State bird, the sportsmen are beginning to think that they had made a mistake in preferring the quail at the onset, as it begins to appear to them somewhat inappropriate that the State emblem should be the target of their guns. Indeed, this might stimulate too much sentimentality in favor of the chosen favorite and inspire an attempt to place the elected bird on the closed list, which would be impracticable and undesirable.

As to the recent complaints against faulty measures pursued to poison rodents, he explained that quail indeed had been killed but that measures had been taken to remedy that fault. The use of phosphorous and of thalium had been discontinued; experiments revealed that quail enjoy a sort of immunity from strychnine and they are known not to like barley; barley poisoned by strychnine serves the purpose of poisoning rodents and will not kill quail (and the same may be said of doves). It has been practical to propagate the quail.

The speaker had to leave for next time the discussion on propagation of desirable species and the control of predatory animals—including the "wild house-cat".



### WATERFOWL: A FLYING THOUGHT

Waterfowl, ducks and geese, are from many points of view the most important group of birds in the world. There are many species well represented in almost every country. Wherever found they are extensively hunted and furnish a considerable food supply; in fact, probably more so than any other avian order. In the United States more money is invested in duck clubs than in any other kind of shooting preserves. Waterfowl are considered so valuable that a few years ago it was deemed necessary to give them more uniform protection throughout the United States. The Federal Migratory Bird law was adopted. There was considerable doubt as to the constitutionality of this law and in order to make it binding a treaty was entered into with Great Britain in which were incorporated the provisions of the law. By this act the question of constitutionality was avoided, a treaty not being subject to court review. Ducks have thus flown into international law. Since then, as before, strenuous have been the discussions and arguments as to what was needed to prevent feared extermination. In spite of all this, our knowledge as to the extent of their breeding grounds, the annual crop, where they come from and where they go to is just about the same as it was before they entered international society.

The first of August, sometimes a few days earlier, sometimes later, there comes down the Pacific Coast and as far as 300 miles off shore a vast army of

sprig or pintail, as they are known in the East. This flight reaches Crescent City only a day or two ahead of San Diego. They gather on the south end of San Francisco Bay morning and evening. They may be seen winging their way from the Spring Valley lakes to the bay. Last fall a flock was noted that extended from the bay shore to the crest of the hills east of the lakes and in places nearly a half mile wide. From the bay they spread into the interior valleys and are commonly supposed to be local bred birds, but they come from the North, no one knows just whence. California is within the breeding range of several species, but only a very small percent of the birds found in this State during the winter are local birds. Just how many out of every thousand that come to our State remain for any length of time we do not know, but the number is doubtless small. Years ago, before the extensive marshes of the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys were turned into farms, California was much more attractive from the ducks' viewpoint. Now, practically the only natural duck land is that which is held by duck clubs.

We know the changes that have occurred in our own State, but what do we know of what has occurred in the region where the great masses of waterfowl breed? A census of ducks in the United States will give interesting information, but this information will be nowhere near as valuable as would a census in the real breeding ground. Banding ducks within the United States gives excellent data as to their migrations within our border, but it does not solve the problem as to where the great flight originates.

Additional laws creating further restrictions for the shooter to respect will do some good, but it will not stop the loss of thousands of ducks from the so-called duck disease. Dave Madsen, Superintendent of the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge in Utah, made the statement in Seattle last September that this disease had caused the death of more ducks during the last twenty years than were killed by all of the hunters of the West during that time. Before we can more intelligently protect our waterfowl we must know more about them. Still unanswered is the question of the immortal Bryant—

"Whither midst the falling dew

While glow the heaven with the last steps of day,

Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue

Thy solitary way?"

JOSEPH S. HUNTER.

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## ANNUAL DUES

The annual dues for the opening year are now payable, and our members are requested to make their remittance as early as possible to the Treasurer. The work of each officer is voluntary and a little co-operation on the part of the members will greatly lessen the tasks assumed for the good of the Association. Please not to wait for a notice; your early remittance will greatly help the Treasurer in his accounting and the Secretary in keeping the correct and complete list of members, and it would not be fair to have your name on the mailing list of THE GULL unless your dues are properly paid up.

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**DECEMBER FIELD TRIP** was taken on Sunday the sixteenth to Golden Gate Park. The usual route was followed entering the Park at Forty-third Avenue, visiting the two northerly lakes, then making a side trip from the second lake to the park stables, where the quail are fed. Retracing our steps, we visited the third lake, then Spreckel's Lake where luncheon was eaten. After luncheon Lloyd and Stow Lakes were visited. By this time our party had dwindled down to eight, four of whom left us after visiting the above lakes. The remaining four decided to visit the Cliff House hoping to find the surf-birds which are wintering there.



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The weather was unusually cold with heavy frost, but calm and clear. This condition perhaps accounted for the rather small list of species. But as a compensation for this, several of the species allowed us close-up views that were most satisfactory.

On previous trips large flocks of Nuttall and golden-crowned sparrows were found. On this trip, Nuttalls were very scarce and golden-crowns entirely absent. A fair number of fox sparrows were found, one was singing.

The favorite willow which stood by the second lake has been cut down so the red-breasted sapsucker which was always found in it has moved into another willow near the third lake. He seems perfectly at home in spite of the automobiles passing within about six feet of the tree.

A small flock of pipits were in the buffalo paddock with more than one hundred twenty five killdeer.

The usual species of ducks in about the same numbers were found on their respective lakes, except that a third pair of buffle-heads has joined the usual two pairs found on Stow Lake. An albino ruddy duck is wintering in the park again.

The trip to the Cliff House proved a success. Both the ruddy and the black turnstones were there and with them eight surf-birds. An excellent opportunity was afforded to study glaucous-winged, western, herring and California gulls. Large numbers of brown pelicans and Farallon cormorants were on the Seal Rocks.

Birds observed in the park were: Pied-billed grebe; common mallard, baldpate, American pintail, canvas-back, lesser scaup, ring-necked buffle-head and ruddy ducks; Coast California quail; American coot; northern killdeer; glaucous-winged, northern western and California gulls; Anna hummingbird; Monterey red-shafted flicker, Sierra Nevada red-breasted sapsucker; black phoebe; Santa Cruz chestnut-backed chickadee; Pacific coast bush-tit; red-breasted nuthatch; Vigor's Bewick wren; western robin, coast varied and dwarf hermit thrushes; western ruby-crowned kinglet; American pipit; Audubon warbler; San Francisco yellow-throat; Brewer blackbird; California linnet, San Francisco spotted towhee, fox sparrow, Pt. Pinos Oregon junco, Nuttall white-crowned and Santa Cruz song sparrows. Introduced species observed at Stow Lake were: Natives—Canada, Hutchins and cackling geese, white pelican: Exotics—Pekin and Muscovy ducks, mute and black swans.

At the Cliff House: California brown pelican; Farallon double-crested cormorant; surf-bird, ruddy and black turnstones; glaucous-winged, northern western, herring and California gulls. Fifty-one species.

Members in attendance were: Mrs. Stephens; Misses Bennet, Cohen, Werner; Dr. Card, Messrs. Bryant, Lockerbie, Meyer. Guests: Messrs. Axelrod, Bacigalupi, Bidinger, Saegaard, Sebastian, Stephens, Van Schaick, Wagner. Eight members and eight guests.

CHAS. A. BRYANT, Historian.

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## AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

President.....	Dr. Frederick W. D'Evelyn.....	Phelan Bldg. San Francisco
Recording Secretary.....	Mrs. Carl Smith.....	563 Forty-second Ave., San Francisco
Corresponding Secretary.....	C. B. Lastreto.....	260 California St., San Francisco
Treasurer.....	Chas. Bryant.....	Room 1011, 65 Market St., San Francisco

Meets second Thursday of each month at 8:00 p.m., in the Board Room of the State Board of Harbor Commissioners, Ferry Building, Second Floor, Room 19.

Address Bulletin correspondence to the Corresponding Secretary.

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